



# Strategic development of a city university for Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) under the special local government organization

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## Abstract

This research aimed to develop a strategy of a city university for Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) under the special local government organization. There were two objectives, as follows: (1) to study the future of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization using the Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research (EDFR) method by interviewing 19 experts and stakeholders with purposive sampling by analyzing and calculating the median and interquartile range; and (2) to develop the strategy of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization using the Sustainability Balanced Scorecard (SBSC) method by focusing on a group of seven experts and then confirming with 43 staff members from the management of Navamindradhiraj University, analyzing and calculating the mean and standard deviation. The results showed the future studies in accordance with Thailand's Higher Education Standards of 2018 as follows: (1) build people for the future; (2) create high-impact research; (3) build a society by connecting HEI, cities, private agencies, and communities; (4) create value-added for the city with local arts and culture; and (5) flexible management based on sustainability with good governance. Next, the strategic development of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization had six strategic themes with 14 strategies, as follows: (1) drive sustainability with two strategies; (2) strengthen collaboration with two strategies; (3) knowledge transformation with two strategies; (4) positive social impacts with two strategies; (5) drive management excellence with two strategies; and (6) high-performance organization, with three strategies.

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## Introduction

There are two special local government organizations in Thailand, Bangkok, and Pattaya City. There has been

an effort to establish an additional special local government for areas with specific potential or characteristics with economic, social, environmental, or local needs for systematic management of cities such as Phuket, Chiang Mai, Laem Chabang, Mae Sot, Koh Samui (Pinijwong, 2019). The National Education Act of 1999 (1999), Section 41, states that the local government organization has the right to provide education at any

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level or all levels according to availability, suitability, and local needs. There is only one higher education institution (HEI) under the special local government organization, Navamindradhiraj University (NMU), established in 2010 as a government agency under Bangkok Metropolis Administration. It is determined to be “A city university” that produces knowledge and research to be the knowledge tank of the city, that can be used to solve problems and increase the capacity of the city to move forward in a direction. A city university focuses on area based and community development in particular. It is responsible for integrating cooperation with the city to improve the quality of life of urban communities as most universities prefer to concentrate on the overall picture. Furthermore, a city university can integrate knowledge based on the spatial environment to be recognized by regulatory agencies and the community to offer economic and social advantages to cities in accordance with the Sustainable Cities and Communities Development Goals (SDG11). The city university's strategic development has progressed into a model for both education management and supporting urban development in accordance with the spatial context, positively affecting resource planning in terms of capability, as well as a guideline for establishing city universities in other areas with potential and unique characteristics in the future, including related HEIs.

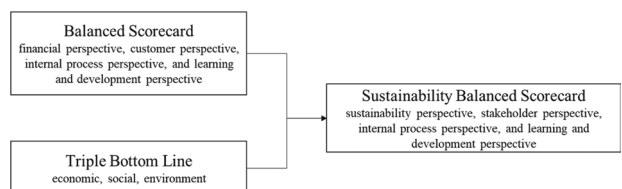
To drive universities towards more competitiveness and sustainability over time, it is necessary to clearly define the direction, efficient resource allocation at all levels, and lead to action with various action plans in the same direction (Fathi & Wilson, 2009, p. 91; Kaewjamnong, 2012; Pattanapong, 2003). Therefore, the university's top executives need to develop an effective strategic plan that combines both educational missions to produce personnel in various fields for the city, develop the city's personnel capabilities to accommodate future changes, and meet the expectations of the social community.

## Literature Reviews

The concept of a city university has been established by city's legislature under the educational law for a long time. For example, the City University of New York, founded in 1847 by the New York State Legislature under Section 125 of the State Education Act, section 6201 has an independent tertiary education system governed by its own Board of Trustees responsible for the governance (The City University of New York, 2016). Martínez-Brawley and Roatch (2003) stated that a city university

concept was subject to ensure that people at all levels have access to higher education more efficiently and that the expertise of higher education can be leveraged to effectively solve complex social problems in addition to learning, teaching, conducting research, and providing academic services. In addition, Wasi (2010) supported that “One University, One Province” is integrated by using local communities as a framework and delivering appropriate technology and science to encourage communities and local government organizations, such as the synthesis of policies from practice to form various public policies that benefit the community.

The Sustainability Balanced Scorecard (SBSC) method evolved from the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), developed by Robert Kaplan and David Norton in 1990, and Triple Bottom Line (TBL), developed by John Elkington in 1997. The BSC is a management tool that translates organizational missions and strategies into action through performance indicators to support strategic management and measurement systems (Decharin, 2003, pp. 14–15; Karathanos & Karathanos, 2005; Kaplan & Norton, 1992). Moreover, the concept of the BSC can also be applied to the performance appraisal of government and non-profit organizations (Kaplan & Bower, 1999), and many universities have successfully applied the concept of the BSC to support their vision and mission to achieve success (Kallingal, 2011). Hubbard (2009) stated that TBL is a framework for measuring organizational performance, including social aspects and the environment more from traditional finance. Moreover, the sustainable social development is an important mission of HEIs in Thailand (Rungruay, 2012). Applying the SBSC concept for universities identified the use of sustainability perspective in place of finance perspective (Hansen, 2010). In addition, HEIs should link sustainability to their strategy by defining four perspectives: sustainability perspective, stakeholder perspective, internal process perspective, and learning and development perspective (Dias Sardinha et al., 2003) for which the conceptual framework (Figure 1) was as follows.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

## Methodology

This study used a mixed methodology to identify the future of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization using the Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research (EDFR) method according to Thailand's Higher Education Standards of 2018, consisting of five standards: learner outcomes, research and innovation, academic service, culture and Thainess, and management, developing the strategy of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization according to the SBSC, including the sustainability perspective, stakeholder perspective, internal processes perspective, and learning and development perspective in terms of vision, vision's key performance indicator, mission, strategic theme, strategy map, and key performance indicator.

### Participants

#### *Participants 1*

Purposive sampling was used to interview 19 experts and stakeholders who contributed in shaping a city university as follows: (1) Enablers were five educational development plan specialists with more than five years of experience in education; (2) Implementers were four university executives from the vice-rector level up; (3) Regulators were six executives of the special local government organization or representatives with more than three years of work experience; and (4) Key movers were four community leaders who had offered teaching, research, or academic services to that community for more than one year.

#### *Participants 2*

The seven experts selected by a focusing group with purposive sampling came from four experts in strategy with more than five years of balanced scorecard experience, and three, the vice-rectors of Navamindradhiraj University, and the 43 purposive sampling staff by confirming the suitability and feasibility of the developed strategy came from the vice-rector level upwards of Navamindradhiraj University, dean, deputy dean, head of the department, and faculty senate of Navamindradhiraj University.

### Data Collection

The research was conducted under the principles of respect for human dignity and was reviewed by the Srinakharinwirot University Human Ethics Committee

(code number SWUEC/X/G-320/2563X). The research tool used to collect data was an interview questionnaire. Five professionals examined the quality of the interview questions, investigating the accuracy of the interview question content using the Index of Congruence (IOC). All interview questions were 1.0, used for data collection from the purposive study sample. The data record was conducted by taking notes and audio recordings and by asking permission from the participants for such to be used for later validation. These interviews enabled the researcher to explain the research objectives and build a good relationship by interactive interviewing with purposive sampling of 19 experts and stakeholders, confirming their opinions according to the Likert's Rating Scale 5-level model with the same sample group. After that, the strategy of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization according to the SBSC was developed and discussed with seven experts by a focusing group. Subsequent modifications were then applied to the strategy of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization. Then, the researcher confirmed the suitability and feasibility of the developed strategy according to the Likert's Rating Scale 5-level model with the 43 purposive sampling staff of Navamindradhiraj University.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using a statistical program. Statistics to study the future of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization used the median and interquartile range, and describing the strategy of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization used the mean and standard deviation. The data are described in [Table 1](#).

## Results

The suitability of the strategy of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization is shown in [Table 1](#). Vision and all missions showed the following in a sequence at a high level with an overall average score of 4.395, 4.442, 4.326, 4.326, 4.186, and 4.372. Levels of suitability among the different strategic themes indicated a high level with an average score as follows: (1) drive sustainability (4.349); (2) strengthen collaboration (4.419); (3) knowledge transformation (4.372); (4) positive social impacts (4.372); (5) drive management excellence (4.442); and (6) high-performance organization (4.372).

**Table 1** The suitability assessment of the strategy of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization

Vision, mission, and strategy	$\bar{X}$	SD
Vision		
Integration of urban science for sustainable urban development	4.395	0.728
Mission		
1. Build people for the future to meet the needs of cities and urban development plans.	4.442	0.734
2. Create high-impact research to solve city problems as well as to create knowledge into good practice and build on the innovation.	4.326	0.808
3. Build a society by connecting HEI, cities, private agencies, and communities.	4.326	0.680
4. Create value-added for the city by utilizing local arts and culture in the context of the city to help improve the quality of life of the community.	4.186	0.795
5. Flexible management based on sustainability with good governance.	4.372	0.788
Strategic theme 1: Drive sustainability	4.349	0.783
Strategy 1: Educational asset utilization	4.326	0.778
Strategy 2: Optimize revenue mix	4.186	0.795
Strategic theme 2: Strengthen collaboration	4.419	0.698
Strategy 3: Expand the strategic partners	4.442	0.700
Strategy 4: Enlarge interoperability	4.395	0.728
Strategic theme 3: Knowledge transformation	4.372	0.757
Strategy 5: Increase learners' capabilities	4.302	0.773
Strategy 6: Effective knowledge platform	4.279	0.826
Strategic theme 4: Positive social impacts	4.372	0.725
Strategy 7: Encourage sustainability	4.279	0.797
Strategy 8: Continuous amplification to society	4.326	0.837
Strategy 9: Mobilize high impact research and innovation	4.326	0.747
Strategic theme 5: Drive management excellence	4.442	0.734
Strategy 10: Excel to excellence organization	4.395	0.728
Strategy 11: High flexible management	4.395	0.728
Strategic theme 6: High-performance organization	4.372	0.757
Strategy 12: Ensure human capital readiness	4.419	0.731
Strategy 13: Enhance digital technology	4.442	0.734
Strategy 14: Enable knowledge management system	4.326	0.747

## Discussion

### *Vision and Mission*

Based on the findings, this vision is to integrate urban sciences for sustainable urban development, particularly in the areas of education, health, quality of life, society, safety, and the environment, in order to support the transformation of knowledge into good practice and application in urban development to achieve economic, social, and environmental sustainability. The mission of a city university for HEIs under a special local government organization is in line with the guidelines for driving Thailand's higher education philosophy and the new higher education system in the field of creating graduates and developing human resources of all ages (Lifelong Learning) to improve the community's quality of life in both quantitative and qualitative dimensions in each area.

#### *Strategic theme 1: Drive sustainability*

According to data from the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (2020), the total number of new students at

higher education institutions has decreased over the last three years, from 443,040 in 2018 to only 417,539 in 2020, necessitating the creation of other sources of income to compensate for HEIs under special local government organizations to be able to provide sustainable educational opportunities. To take use of educational assets, it is the utilization of educational assets such as research, innovation, knowledge, and others to generate monetary and non-monetary benefits. The mission of higher education institutions under the special local government organization is not simply focused on workforce development. Furthermore, HEIs should focus on managing the proportion of income related to education management, such as registration fees, fines, and fees, versus income not related to education management, such as income from the utilization of research, patents, innovations, service fees, research funding, donations, and so on, so that the university has income stability, depending on each university's ability to manage its existing long-term valued assets and create new ones.

#### *Strategic theme 2: Strengthen collaboration*

HEIs under the special local government organization can promote systematically and continuously interoperability in terms of the university society private and city partnership

as a strategic partner based on mutual benefits to help solve the city's problems according to the urban development plan to support strategic alliances between educational institutions, cities, private sectors, and communities, in which city universities focus on improving the academic community through use of a strong participatory learning community and strengthening partnerships with urban communities.

#### *Strategic theme 3: Knowledge transformation*

The effective knowledge platform may use digital technology to support learning to be more accessible into four platforms: (1) collaborative learning in the classroom/online learning platform; (2) experiential learning in the community platform; (3) authentic learning in the workplace platform; and (4) self-learning in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). In response to the COVID-19 epidemic, the use of digital technology in reskilling or upskill training is increasing at an accelerated rate, according to the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Survey 2020. (World Economic Forum, 2020, p.14). HEIs can expand degree and certificate programs into all age groups to increase abilities on theoretical learning and practice in different areas of the city to work for the city and solve the city's problems.

#### *Strategic theme 4: Positive social impacts*

The research problem stems from the city's desire to address the community's and society's requirements by promoting high-impact research and innovation in area-based research at both the local and national levels. In order to continuously expand results to society, HEIs should establish the following roles and responsibilities: (1) the community is a source of learning for both teaching and research; (2) the city and other agencies are supporters who help to expand the results even further; and (3) HEIs are a knowledge tank. To support positive social impacts, HEIs enlarge for sustainability by upgrading the quality of life of urban communities in terms of economy, society, and environment that are in line with Purcell et al. (2019), who found that Harvard University has the office for sustainability as a key engine in driving the sustainability management plan by integrating research, teaching into innovation discovery through the city model as a large laboratory (Living Lab) and is used for the benefit of society.

#### *Strategic theme 5: Drive management excellence*

HEIs should apply high-flexibility management, which is not the case with an autonomous university's current management system. Under the policy of the local government organization, it provides administrative independence. The Office of the Higher Education Commission approaches the Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX) for the integrated growth

of educational quality as one of the enhanced university managements to excellence (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2019). Furthermore, the Office of the Higher Education Commission developed an action plan for all 150 HEIs in Thailand to drive the educational quality development process for excellence using the EdPEX criteria between 2015 and 2019. This finding is consistent with Karathanos and Karathanos (2005), who found that The Baldrige National Quality Award in Education can be used as a tool for managing HEIs to create a proactive learning process that supports rapidly changing technology and stakeholder's involvement in the community, maintaining financial stability and cost efficiency improvements.

#### *Strategic theme 6: High-performance organization*

The role of HEIs under the special local government organization must be to develop personnel with the knowledge, skills, and competences required by the university to respond to future transformations. This is consistent with Thailand's recommendations for guiding the philosophy of HEIs and the new higher education system in acquiring skills and developing personnel, which emphasizes knowledge transformation rather than just creating knowledge. Static and dynamic competences linked to the recognition and reward system, as well as budgeting, accounting, finance, and high-speed network technologies that enable working anywhere, anytime, and in all forms for teaching and learning management, should be implemented by HEIs. Furthermore, HEIs should build an institutional development plan for an exponential organization, as well as a knowledge management plan, high-performance digital technology, and continuous improvement to achieve breakthrough results.

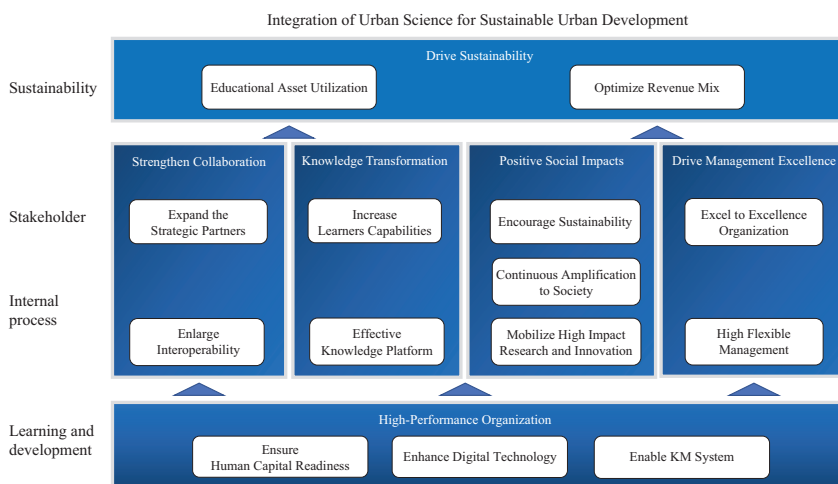
The researcher developed a strategy map of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization as shown in [Figure 2](#).

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## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The strategy of a city university for HEIs under the special local government organization develops in four perspectives: sustainability, stakeholder perspective, internal process perspective, and learning and development perspective, which includes key strategies that show capacity and development opportunities to support both the mission of education management and the mission of sustainability. HEIs should research current and future trends in major global changes such as sustainability goals, particularly in the areas of information technology and educational innovation. These variables will work as a catalyst in the development of new educational systems in urban area. However, there is no such thing as the perfect strategic plan, HEIs must alter educational





**Figure 2** Strategy map

plans and implement new plans fast and continually, considering strategic initiatives, human capital, budgetary, and the ability to assess ambiguity throughout that period to achieve a major revolutionary purpose. Furthermore, HEIs should arrange the strategy deployment to communicate a strategy-oriented work culture by providing policies from all levels of management, as well as implementing a monitoring and evaluation system to enhance stakeholder morale.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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